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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
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SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: USG CONCERN OVER ILLICIT CASH COURIERS

REF: STATE 16120

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¶1. (U) NEA/ARP Office Director Alan Misenheimer and Econoff February 14 delivered reftel demarche concerning the threat posed by cash couriers and bulk cash smuggling used to finance terrorism and other illicit activity to Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) Director of Financial Institution Supervision Abdul-Rahman Mohammed Al-Baker, Head of Compliance Directorate Ahmed Bumtaia and Compliance Unit Analyst Bushra Al-Haddad.

¶2. (SBU) Al-Baker said regulations implementing Article 5 of Bahrain's Anti-Money Laundering Law, which addresses cash couriers, were being finalized and would be completed in coming weeks. Bumtaia added that these regulations were comprehensive and reflected collaboration with every relevant government entity, including Customs and the Ministries of Finance, Industry and Commerce.

¶3. (SBU) Al-Haddad noted that Bahrain's imminent implementation of cash courier regulations was consistent with the GOB's desire to protect its strong banking reputation. She noted that Bahrain had recently reviewed its mutual evaluation with MENA-FATF and that the results of the evaluation had just been published on the CBB's website, [www.cbb.gov.bh](http://www.cbb.gov.bh). She said that the MENA-FATF and the IMF were also expected to publish the evaluation soon.

¶4. (SBU) Director Misenheimer noted that Bahrain's record on banking oversight presents a commendable story and solicited Bahrain's continued close cooperation. "Rest assured," responded Al-Haddad, "we will do everything in our power" to maintain Bahrain's high banking regulatory standards.

¶5. (SBU) Director Misenheimer and EconOff also delivered reftel demarche to the Ministry of Interior Economic Crime Directorate's Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU) Director Captain Bassam Al-Miraj. (Note: The AMLU is the U.S. FINCEN equivalent. It is responsible for investigating suspicious transactions, money laundering and terrorist finance cases but does not have regulatory authority. End Note.) Al-Miraj pledged his support and echoed the CBB's description of the status of regulations to implement cash courier provisions of Bahrain's Anti-Money Laundering Law.

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